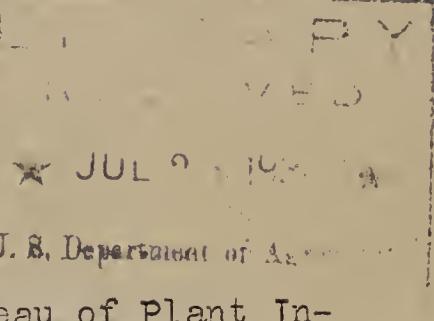


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THE GARDEN CALENDAR.



A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, horticulturist, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through WRC and 34 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, July 1, 1930.

I have been visiting the past two weeks seeing what the neighbors are doing, and incidentally picking up a few points that I thought might be of interest to the members of the Farm and Home audience. First, I visited southeastern New Jersey, mainly around Bridgeton. This region is largely devoted to the growing of fruits and vegetables for the large eastern markets. It is also noted for poultry and egg production, and it is quite the style to have a long poultry house on the back of the lot and a garden on the front with the house occupying one corner. Near Bridgeton is located what is reputed to be the largest fruit and vegetable farm in the eastern United States, if not in the entire country. It is the Seabrook or Del Bay Farms. In addition to several hundred acres of young peach and apple orchards, this farm has several other hundreds of acres which are used for the growing of vegetables. Two hundred and fifty or three hundred acres are fitted with overhead or sprinkler irrigation, and I want to tell you that irrigation comes in handy in raising vegetables during a dry season like we are having in this part of the country this year.

I was especially interested to learn what these New Jersey growers were doing about the matter of plant food in the soil. Formerly, they bought and applied large quantities of manure, but with manure no longer available, they are now using about a ton of a 5 - 8 - 5 fertilizer to the acre, and plowing under all of the refuse materials from their crops, and in addition they grow velvet beans, rye, vetch, crimson clover, and a number of other soil-improving crops to add humus to their soils.

The manager of one of the large trucking farms said that 6 years ago when they bought the farm for \$80 an acre, the local people were astonished when they spent \$150 an acre improving the soil, but continued he, we have gotten it all back, and I figure about 20 per cent interest on the investment.

I spent quite a little time on the large trucking farms watching them harvest cabbage and other crops and pack these crops for the market. Some of the products were going into refrigerator cars and being shipped, while others were loaded directly upon large trucks, and within an hour after they were cut in the fields they were rolling toward Jersey City or New York. This has been made possible by the building of splendid roads throughout that part of the country. I watched them bunching beets, carrots, kohlrabi, and onions on one of the places, how they washed these bunched vegetables under streams of cold water pumped direct from wells. I saw the bunches packed in the containers and loaded upon the trucks. The loads were securely covered with heavy canvas, and away they went to market where they would be on sale in less than 12 hours after they were gathered from the gardens. I remarked to one of the managers about the pile of culs that were left in the packing house, and which were

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being hauled and scattered on the fields to be plowed under, and he said that experience had taught them that it didn't pay to haul culls to market. Cabbage packed on one of these farms, because of its quality, was bringing 50¢ a half-barrel hamper above the ruling market price.

All of the crops in this section were comparatively free from insect injury, and when they were prepared for the market were extremely attractive. On one of the farms visited they were still cutting asparagus from 200 acres, and had cut over 19,000 crates so far this season. The quality of the product even that late in the season, June 17th, was being kept right up to standard. These Jersey farmers have learned what the buying public want and are giving them their money's worth in high quality fruits and vegetables.

In one or two sections that I visited, crops have suffered seriously from drought, and, as the growers had no irrigation facilities, they were unable to produce the highest quality of products. It seems that troubles never come singly, because insects had taken a heavy toll in this section where the drought had been most severe. Many of the growers tell me that they have found that it pays to take special pains in the growing of plants, and that they are using small greenhouses or heated frames more and more each year for starting their plants. They are all fertilizing heavily and cultivating by the most intensive methods with the idea of getting the highest returns per acre. Companion cropping, that is, growing two crops on the land at the same time, is not being practiced to any extent, but one crop is planted following another, and it is not uncommon to see a crop removed in the morning and the land plowed, harrowed, and planted to another crop before the day ends.

The lesson that I get from my visit to the farms of successful fruit and vegetable growers is that in this day of specialized production and keen competition, you not only must grow good products, that are free from insect or disease injury, but you must deliver them to the market in a fresh, clean, and attractive manner in order to win. I see so many cases where one grower is succeeding while his neighbor is dodging the sheriff, and they both seem to have had an equal chance.